

**57th ANNUAL MEETING REPORT  
VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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# THE VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## PREFACE

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) was established by VA Circular No. 117, May 17, 1946, and became a Federally chartered advisory committee on February 5, 1975. The Committee advises the Under Secretary for Health on matters pertaining to the participation of volunteers in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities. Committee membership is open to all national organizations that provide volunteers or donations to VA medical facilities and meet or exceed minimum criteria established by the NAC. Current membership categories and criteria for the NAC are:

1. Service Member (voting) -- maintains the provision of volunteers and VA recognized participation on local VAVS committees at a minimum of thirty VA facilities;
2. Associate Service Member -- maintains the same requirements as Service Members but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities;
3. Donor Member -- donates significant funds or materials to assist or benefit veterans at a minimum of thirty VA facilities; and
4. Associate Donor Member -- maintains the same requirements as Donor Members but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities.

The Chairperson of the NAC is the Chief Communications Officer, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Deputy Chairperson is the Director, Voluntary Service Office, VHA. Each member organization may appoint one National Representative and up to eight Deputy Representatives to serve on the NAC. A member organization may also certify individuals to represent it on local VA facility VAVS Committees where its members actively volunteer.

The NAC meets annually in the spring and its members attend at their personal or their organization's expense. The Executive Committee (EC) of the NAC meets during the VAVS Annual NAC and again in the fall. NAC meetings are open to the public. Advance notice of the purpose, date, time and location of each NAC and EC meeting is published in the Federal Register.

## **Service Member Organizations**

(P indicates present and A indicates absent)

<b><u>Service Member</u></b>	<b><u>Present/Absent</u></b>	
American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc. (EX-POW)	P	
American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. (AGSM)	P	
The American Legion (AL)	P	
The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA)	P	
The American Red Cross (ARC)	P	
AMVETS (AMVETS)	P	
AMVETS Auxiliary (AMVETS Aux.)	P	
American War Mothers (AWM)	P	
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the U.S.A. (BPOE)	P	
Catholic War Veterans (CWV)	P	
Catholic War Veterans Ladies Auxiliary (CWVA)		A
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	P	
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (DAVA)	P	
Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Fleet Reserve Association (FRAA)	P	
The Forty and Eight (40/8)	P	
Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. Inc. (JWV)	P	
National Ladies Auxiliary, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., Inc. (JWVA)	P	
Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA)	P	
Marine Corps League (MCL)	P	
Marine Corps League Auxiliary (MCLA)	P	
The Masonic Service Association of the U.S. (MSA)		A
Military Order of the Cootie of the U.S. (MOC)		P
Ladies Auxiliary to the Military Order of the Cootie of the U.S. (MOCA)	P	
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc. (MOPH)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc. (MOPHA)	P	
National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century (NSCDC)		A
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)		A
Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)	P	
Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A. (PLAV)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary, Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A. (PLAVA)		P
The Salvation Army (SA)	P	
The Sons of the American Legion (SAL)		A
United Voluntary Services (UVS)	P	
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. (VFW)	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. (VFWA)	P	
U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II (SVWWII)		A
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. (VVA)	P	
WAVES National (WAVES)	P	
Women's Army Corps Veterans Association (WACV)	P	

## **Service Member Organizations**

(P indicates present and A indicates absent)

### **Associate Service Member Organizations**

### **Present/Absent**

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFS)		A
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)		
A		
Blinded Veterans (BV)	P	
Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War (DUVCW)	P	
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. (GSW)		P
Honor Society Women Legionnaires (Twenty and Four)		A
The Improved, Benevolent, Protective Order of Elks of the World, Inc. (BPOE)	P	
Italian American War Veterans of the U.S. (IAWV)		P
Ladies Auxiliary, Italian American War Veterans of the U.S. (IAWVA)	P	
National Ladies Auxiliary, Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc. (VWWIA)		P
The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR)		
A		
The National Women's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic (GARA)		P
Navy Mothers' Club of America (NMC)		
A		
Sons of AMVETS (SAMVETS)		P
Supreme Cootiette Club of the U.S. (SCC)		P
Women Marines Association (WMA)	P	

### **Donor Member Organizations**

Bowlers Victory League (BVL)		P
Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV)		P
Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project (HVWP)	P	

### **Honorary Member Organizations**

B'NAI B'rith		A
JWB/Women's Organizations' Services (JWB/WOS)		A
National Auxiliary, United Spanish War Veterans (SWV)		
A		
National Service Star Legion (SSL)		
A		
Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc. (VWWI)		A

**VAVS NAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, April 30, 2003 - 8:00 to 12:00 p.m.**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Executive Committee Chairperson LTC Mary Jones of The Salvation Army.

**Agenda Review/Call for Revisions:** There were no changes or revisions to the agenda, so the Executive Committee meeting agenda was accepted as presented.

**Goals and Objectives:** Executive Committee Vice Chairman Jeffrey A. Dolezal, National Representative, Paralyzed Veterans of America read the goals and objectives of the VAVS NAC Executive Committee:

1. Provide Department of Veteran's Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee an opportunity to conduct its business in a manner that assures achievement of all responsibilities charged by its charter.
2. Provide Committee orientation to local and National VAVS Representatives and Deputies.
3. Present all member organization representatives an overview of current and pending VAVS policies and procedures.
4. Accommodate full and open communications among the member organizations, representatives and the voluntary service central office and field staff.
5. Provide the committees, member organizations with the educational training programs designed to share information geared towards improving volunteer program, with special emphasis on methods to recruit, obtain, motivate and recognize volunteers.
6. Furnish the committee member organizations the opportunity to hear from VA leadership concerning key issues within the department.
7. Arrange for committee review of an action on its pending recommendations.
8. Honor the national recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award, Philip Nodhturft III, student volunteer at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Florida.
9. Honor the male and female VAVS NAC volunteers of the year - Mr. James E. Brennan from Kerrville, TX and Ms. Wanda McLean, Roseburg, Oregon.
10. Recognize Anna Diehl, White City VA Domiciliary, Oregon, as the recipient of the VA Voluntary Service Award for Excellence

**Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting of October 14 and 15, 2002:** Jeffrey A. Dolezal called for corrections or additions. Judith McCombs, National Representative, Vietnam Veterans of America, moved that the minutes be accepted as presented. Bill Bryce, National Representative, Military Order of the Cootie of the U. S., seconded. *The vote was unanimous; motion carried.*

**Host's Welcome:** Mike Wright, Voluntary Service Program Manager, VAMC Indianapolis, thanked his volunteers and staff for their preparations before welcoming everyone to Indianapolis.

**57th Annual Meeting Agenda Overview:** Presentation by Steve Moynihan, Voluntary Service Program Manager, VAMC, Minneapolis, and Laura Balun, Administrative Officer, VA Central Office, Washington, DC, NAC Annual Meeting Planners. There is a detailed agenda in the program booklet. Mr. Moynihan reviewed the agenda, describing the sessions and their locations. He mentioned the change in format for Saturday. Ms. Balun announced the three demonstrations scheduled for Saturday during breakfast.

**VHA Update:** Jim Delgado, Director, Voluntary Service Office, VACO, Washington, DC, made an announcement regarding Jim Holley, Chief Communications Officer, and National Advisory Chairman. Mr. Holley is leaving the VA to assume the position of Minority Staff Director for the House Veterans Affairs Committee with Congressman Lane Evans. The Office of the Undersecretary of Health will make an announcement later about the appointment of an acting Chief Communications Officer.

Mr. Delgado read some statements made by Dr. Roswell regarding the changes in the VA health care system, improvements being made, limited enrollment of veterans after January 17, and mentioned an assisted living pilot project.

Mr. Delgado then asked for responses in regards to Mr. Holley's leaving and Dr. Roswell's remarks. Bill Bryce, commented on Mr. Holley's participation in the President's ceremony at Arlington. LTC Mary Jones asked where the assisted living pilot program is taking place, and Mr. Delgado said he would find out later.

**VAVS Program Update:** Jim Delgado presented this update. Because of Operation Iraqi Freedom, this is an optimal time to find ways to attract more volunteers. Two very important things to the program are recruitment and retention. Getting younger volunteers involved is an important priority to the program; the Veteran's History Project is a good way. There needs to be focus on the generation gap between volunteers as more young veterans come into the system. One student will intern at VACO to plan a middle school volunteering program. Gerald McRaney is the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Chairperson for the second year.

### **Subcommittee Reports:**

**Recommendations Subcommittee:** Mike Manning, Chairman, read the five recommendations pending action by the NAC that were reviewed at the October 2002 meeting. [The complete text is under the "2003 Recommendations" on pages 4-5 of

program booklet.] These recommendations will be read at the Business session of the NAC and voted on. Comments were made by Judith McCombs on a problem in the text, and Mr. Manning said they would be dealt with. Marion Schwerman, National Representative, American Legion Auxiliary, suggested a form of recognition for travel, and Mark Regan, American Legion, asked that acronyms be spelled out when used as examples.

**NAC Volunteer of the Year Subcommittee:** Presented by LTC Mary Jones, Chairperson. The Female Volunteer of the Year is Wanda McLean, from Roseburg, Oregon, a volunteer with the American Red Cross. The Male Volunteer of the Year is James Brennan from Kerrville, an American Legion volunteer. Ms. McLean is unable to attend. Carol Williams, National Representative, American Red Cross, said her award was presented at an earlier ceremony and thanked all who helped with this.

**Membership:** Presented by Del "Bulldog" Turner. Mr. Turner recommended that initial contact with organizations should come from Central Office. Jim Delgado responded by saying officials have been contacted.

**Recruitment:** Mark Regan, Chairman, acknowledged the members of his committee: Pat Cody, National Representative, Marine Corps League; Pam Thomas, National Representative, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution; Carol Williams, and thanked Mr. Moynihan. Mr. Regan mentioned the surveys to be given at the May 1 business meeting. Saturday there will be a focus group to foster discussion of methods and challenges of recruitment and retention. He recommended to the Executive Committee that a dialogue is started between NAC members, and presented his report.

The NAC SOP revisions were mentioned by Judith McCombs, who discussed the history of the SOP, focusing on the original formation of the SOP. The NAC charter upgrade is significant.

**Parke Board Update:** presented by Fred Burns, Deputy National Representative, VFW, and President of James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board. Mr. Burns acknowledged those who helped him in his first year, then presented a report. Mike Manning presented the financial report, and will have a report to present at the October 2003 meeting. Mr. Burns asked for recommendations from the committee to fill vacancies.

**VAVS Partners, Inc. Treasurer's Report:** Jerry Butler, Treasurer, presented. There is a grand total of \$37,246.29.

**VAVS Membership Report:** Laura Balun presented the NAC March 2003 member organization data, which is a compilation of the NAC member organizations and their status during the first six months of Fiscal year 2003 (October 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003). Ms. Balun compared VHA 37 and 49 to the new reports to be provided after October. On September 30, all organizations will be converted to the new timekeeping system. The new report will be run quarterly. Part II of the new report will list a percentage of all NAC organizations donated to total volunteer hours. Age groupings

will be graphed (nationally, not by organization). The Donations report is still being worked on. The next most accurate report will be at the end of the fiscal year. Jim Delgado addressed the issue of untimely minutes, and asked for quick notification of any problems in regard to this issue.

(Recess.)

(Whereupon, the meeting of the National Executive Committee was resumed.)

**National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Report:** Presented by Laura Balun. Gerald McRaney is serving as Chairperson again. The National Salute Program received 382,000 valentines. The program continues to be very visible; there were 34,000 visitors to 400,000 veterans during that week. National Salute is an opportunity for the media to tell the story of the VA. Last year, 177 volunteers were recruited during that one week.

### **Unfinished Business:**

**2004 Annual Meeting Update:** Laura Balun reported that the meeting will be held in Orlando, Florida, May 26-30. The nightly rate is \$85, plus 1% non-deductible Orange County tax. It will be held at the Rosen Plaza.

**Future Meeting Plans - 2005:** Ms. Balun said that the Marriott Camelback in Phoenix added hidden charges to the proposed contract, so the meeting will be held at the Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort in Scottsdale, on May 25-28, instead. There will be an 11.67% tax (not tax-exempt in the state of Arizona).

### **New Business:**

**NAC Report:** Presented by LTC Mary Jones. Reports will be presented on the morning of May 1. She had not received 100% of the reports, and said that any brief reports may be added for the presentation. Joseph L. Kee, AMVETS, mentioned that he didn't receive a request for a report.

**Fall 2003 Executive Committee Meeting:** Jeff A. Dolezal asked whether this meeting should be in Orlando or D.C. Bill Bryce asked about Saturday night stays and Ms. Balun assured him that they are included in hotel negotiations.

Ms. Balun presented option one, that the meeting be held at the Rosen Plaza, Orlando Florida. Their usual rate is \$95 per diem, but they will give an \$89 rate for the Executive Committee meeting. It would be Monday - Tuesday, the 20-21. There would be one percent tax and free parking.

Option two would be in D.C. on Monday - Tuesday or Thursday - Friday, but \$150 per night, plus tax.

Mr. Bryce recommended D. C., but 12 voted in favor of Orlando. The meeting will be



held in Orlando, ***motion carried***. The dates are not changeable.

**Appointment of Executive Committee Vice Chair:** Jim Delgado thanked outgoing Chair LTC Mary Jones and presented her with a certificate signed by Jim Holley. LTC Mary Jones thanked everyone. Jeffrey A. Dolezal expressed his appreciation and Mr. Delgado thanked her for sharing her grace and leadership. Ed Hartman, National Representative, Disabled American Veterans, has agreed to serve as Vice Chairman.

**Good of the Order:** Bill Bryce will be replaced in August 2003 permanently and thanked everyone who helped him during his 15 years with VAVS. Mike Manning personally thanked LTC Mary Jones. Mark Regan brought up the idea of making a publication listing current member organizations. Jim Delgado suggested that the member organizations worked with the Central Office on that.

Bill Bryce moved for adjournment, seconded by Judith McCombs. ***The vote was unanimous; motion carried***. The meeting was adjourned.

### **REPRESENTATIVE/DEPUTY TRAINING AND ORIENTATION WORKSHOP Wednesday, April 30, 2003 - 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.**

Mr. Keith Butcher, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA NY Harbor Health Care System Brooklyn Campus, conducted the National Representative/Deputy Training and Orientation.

Mr. Butcher presented a PowerPoint presentation and discussion covering the purpose of NAC, the duties and responsibilities of National Representatives, Deputy Representatives, and local representatives. He explained the National VAVS Executive Committee and its membership criteria, Local VAVS committee appointments and performance measures, purpose and structure, and membership qualifications. The VHA Central Office structure was reviewed. He discussed the purpose of annual joint reviews and the responsibilities related to them. Times are changing and health care is changing. The priorities of VAVS are: recruitment/retention, business/corporation community involvement, and training staff who utilize volunteers.

### **OPEN FORUM Wednesday, April 30, 2003 - 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.**

**Opening Remarks:** Jeffrey A. Dolezal opened the meeting by noting that the primary goal of this session is for the VAVS family to achieve maximum open communication between the National Representatives and Deputies, the Voluntary Service field and Central Office staff. The forum is also supposed to help inform the National Representatives and Deputies of all business pending at the 57th annual meeting and provides for an informal review of that business prior to the larger, more formal, Business Sessions.

**Introductions:** The Voluntary Service chiefs in attendance introduced themselves.

**Overview of 57th Annual Meeting:** Jeffrey A. Dolezal reviewed the agenda and associated activities of the Annual Meeting, then turned it over to Jim Delgado.

**Current Issues/Concerns within VAVS:** Jim Delgado first thanked Jeff for pinch-hitting for LTC Mary Jones and running the meeting. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training is a new experience that will need to become part of routine training and orientation. Background checks must be dealt with by exception until VA policy on them has been published. The time-keeping package is web-based, and by the end of the fiscal year, all VA facilities should be fully implementing the new package.

Mr. Delgado mentioned the issue of General Post funds, CO Advance, and fund-raising. He also mentioned that an important issue is sustainability in relation to recruitment of volunteers. Increased community participation is needed. Student volunteers are a priority.

Mr. Delgado and Mr. Dolezal then took questions from the attendees. Discussion ensued on matters related to CBOC contracts, VAVS minutes for integrated facilities, the pilot project for in-home care, school-age volunteers, the Veteran's History Project, how to increase the number of corporate volunteers, Respite program, the HIPAA program, Baby-boomer volunteer recruitment, new limited enrollment at VA, recruiting and retention, Guaranteed Annual Budget, staff representatives at VAVS meetings, aging Representatives/Deputies, increase of demand and needs compared with a decrease in funds and volunteers, and the cost of transport for volunteers.

Jeffrey A. Dolezal requested that the National Representatives notify the registration desk if either their National commander or President is in attendance at this Annual Meeting so they can be recognized. Jim Delgado then adjourned the meeting.

### **OPENING CEREMONIES**

**Wednesday, April 30, 2003 - 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

**Call to Order:** The 57th Annual Meeting of the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee was called to order by Jeffrey A. Dolezal, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Vice Chairman, National Executive Committee.

**Presentation of Colors:** The Colors were presented by the Northwest High School JROTC.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Loren E. Sturgeon, VAVS Representative, AMVETS.

**Invocation:** The invocation was delivered by George E. Brattain, VAVS Representative, American Legion.

**Introductions:** The attendees seated at the head table were introduced by Jeffrey A. Dolezal: Jim Delgado, Director; Indiana Lt. Governor Joseph Kernan; Dr. Leo Mackay, Deputy, Secretary of Veterans Affairs; George E. Brattain; Mr. Robert Sabin, Director, Roudebush VA Medical Center; Ms. Linda Belton, Network Director, VISN 11.

Jeffrey A. Dolezal gave thanks to the meeting planners and the Roudebush VA Medical Center who all worked to make a successful conference.

**Welcome:** Mr. Robert Sabin extended a Hoosier welcome to all the attendees, and expressed hope for a fruitful meeting and that all would leave with good feelings about Indianapolis.

Ms. Linda Belton welcomed all to VISN 11 and thanked all for their commitment to service. She described VISN 11 and the accomplishments made within it.

**Opening remarks:** Presented by Joseph E. Kernan, Lt. Governor of Indiana.

Mr. Kernan said that in this time, it is an honor to be with those who think of veterans every day, who contribute time, value and effort to volunteer, and who give support through difficult times. He thanked the group for all that they do and mentioned that Hoosier hospitality means that visitors are treated as guests. He said that Indianapolis truly realizes the great contributions made by veterans, mentioning the many monuments to veterans, and that the community embraces veterans.

**Keynote address:** Mr. Dolezal introduced Dr. Leo S. Mackay, Jr., Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

"Thank you, it's a real pleasure to be here. In my two years in office, this is actually my third visit to Indianapolis. The Lt. Governor is right, there is a real "Hoosier" hospitality and I do hope and trust that you will enjoy your stay here in Indianapolis. I'm sorry that the Lt. Governor had to leave, I wanted to ask him how he polled 82% in his last race. The only person I know who ever out-polled that figure in an election was Saddam Hussein.

"In all seriousness -- I would think he's one heck of a public servant. After people know you, and you have a record, to poll over 80 percent is a real testament to his skill and his zeal in serving the public.

"I want to thank you, Chairman Dolezal, for that real kind word of introduction. And all of you, thank you for your reception -- it's not often that I get one of my jokes laughed at, so I appreciate that. It's a pleasure to be with you here tonight.

"On behalf of the department of which I am so privileged to serve, let me first take this opportunity to personally thank the Advisory Committee for its commitment to the gift of giving -- not only in our department, but indeed, across our great land. Britain's great statesman, and it's so hard to call him the greatest, but he's my personal favorite in a country that has such a long history, Sir Winston Churchill, once observed that you get a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.

"Members of this committee and indeed all of you who are gathered here are exponents of that philosophy. You give of yourselves. You give advice, guidance, and you give the benefit of your experience. You give of your time and yourselves, in an effort to foster a culture of responsibility and citizenship and service in America. For VA, your role is indeed critical, critical to our network of operations.

"You tell us what is working, and more importantly, you tell us what is not working. What lessons learned have been gained from our Voluntary Service operations, and most important, you offer recommendations to bring about a better program, a stronger program, a program that ministers more closely, more nearly to the needs of our veterans.

"In this way, VA has reaped the rewards of both volunteerism and of your expertise. Let me add that at VA, we are truly fortunate to have some of the very best volunteers in the nation, if not the world.

"This week, America celebrates its legions of volunteers, because this country knows, as indeed Winston Churchill knew, that the value of volunteering is without measure. Its touchstones are compassion, constancy, and an unshakable commitment to others -- the stuff of humanity itself. Volunteering strengthens societies and can be seen as a telling measure of a nation's self-image, and indeed, of its self worth. Volunteering bridges the divide between strangers. It strengthens families and relationships and quite simply, it builds a better world, and a better entire community.

"I think this is especially true in our favored land, our beloved country, since the events of September 11. Statistics bear out the fact that since then, volunteering has surged across this nation. We've seen it spike interest in our own Voluntary Service Program. Out of the evil of terror, Americans have galvanized their strength of purpose, have risen up and have found many opportunities to do what needs to be done. We've been reminded that we are citizens of one country, under just one flag, with a sense of obligations to one another, to our nation and to the heritage of freedom and liberty that has been bequeathed to us by those who have defended us throughout history. To meet these obligations, our President, President Bush, has called on every American to commit him or herself to at least two years of community involvement.

"USA Freedom Corps, and its call to serve, is a worthy goal of this great nation, as I know all of you know. Historically, America has always been a nation of volunteers. The notion of volunteering has been entwined with our very identity since the earliest days of Minutemen and Sunshine Patriots, barn raisings and quilting bees. Our long history of charitable work has made volunteering an institution in our national life. Indeed, it can be called a way of life in America. It had addressed and influenced pivotal societal problems, such as the anti-slavery movement, prison reform and literacy, universal suffrage. Today, all across this country, men and women and children still reach out to something greater than themselves, something beyond their reach. Countless numbers of people, from all walks of life, as individuals, or in our case as groups, spend time serving others and meeting some of our most precious social needs. Like VA volunteers, they all make a critical difference. For some, volunteering is simply a generous act, a way of giving back to the world something of themselves.

For others, its more a personal satisfaction, a sharing experience that makes volunteers feel good about themselves and their contribution to those who are in need. And for others still, it can be a personally transforming experience, changing one's perspective on people, on society and perhaps even giving a special purpose to ones life.

"I speak from personal experience when I say that I view volunteering as all of these intangibles. From the standpoint as VA's Chief Operating Officer, I'm well aware that the time and the talents shared by our volunteers are crucial to our practical operations and to the day-to-day upkeep of the great enterprise called the Department of Veterans Affairs. I know also that during this week, you will be attending business and educational sessions that will enhance your ability to support the largest volunteer program in the federal government.

"I'd like to relate to you a story, a set of statistics that tell you what your work means to the department. Last year alone there were 118,000 VA volunteers. They contributed some 13 million hours, volunteer hours. That translates into 6,000 full-time employee equivalent positions and a monetary value of some \$209 million. That is a lot of people power. I thank you for it. If this were not a generous contribution enough, VA volunteers and their sponsored organizations annually contribute an estimated \$40 million more in gifts and donations to VA facilities -- contributions that supplement our congressional appropriations. These contributions enable us to bolster our direct patient care programs, as well as our support activities, programs and activities that may not be fiscal priorities from year to year. The true worth of these statistics cannot be measured simply in dollars or in hours. It is really the quality of the volunteering and the effort in the people that makes a critical difference.

"You constitute caring and reassuring hands. You give warming smiles in words that really reach out and caress. You give friendship. The statistics also don't measure the gratitude that you see etched across the face of veterans when they are touched by one of our volunteers. For VA, those kinds of experience constitute the real value of volunteering.

"So, to the committee members and the volunteers themselves here today, I'd like to remind you that you are among our department's most valuable resources. Indeed, you are an irreplaceable resource. Without your unwavering devotion to helping others, the quality of our services and programs would be severely compromised, and indeed, diminished. You are in so many ways the vital and beating heart of our hospitals and our nursing homes, our outreach and rehabilitation centers, the soul of our hospice and respite and foster care, the very spirit of our homeless programs. You are the American people's representatives at our national cemeteries, where you provide military funeral honors and offer consolation. Sadly, sometimes you are the only one that is there to offer those words of goodbye to a departed veteran. Because of these and a thousand other similar acts of kindness repeated in VA facilities each and every day across America, every day we are always mindful of, and we at VA are grateful for, your contributions and your partnership with us.

"Your work, and the work of VA volunteers across the nation, honors the men and women who have fought for and obtained our precious freedom. Men and women who

have performed admirably in Afghanistan, and here today in Iraq. Those that come home with the scars of battle, some visible, some invisible, but they will all need care. They will all need respite. They will all need hospitality. They will all need your kindness, the arms of fellow citizenship to welcome them back to what is rightfully theirs, the responsibilities and the pleasures of this great land.

“So, during National Volunteer Week, I’d like to again thank you sincerely, from the bottom of my heart, and I know if Secretary Principi was here, or the President was here, they too would thank you sincerely. Thank you for all that you have done, for all you continue to do, and all, God willing, that you will do in the future, with us and for America’s heroes, our veterans. Thank you so very much, enjoy yourself, learn and God speed to you. Thank you.”

Jeffrey A. Dolezal announced that a roll call of member organizations will be conducted during the Business Session, which will also include the NAC report, the Organization’s Commitment, the VAVS report by Jim Delgado, the subcommittee reports, a presentation of new time-keeping system, and a presentation by Jim Donahoe on the Veterans Canteen Service. The registration desk should be informed of the National Presidents and National Commanders in attendance so that they may be introduced. The entertainment at the evenings reception will be provided by Joyce Riley, a violinist.

Ann Frost, Fayette County Recorder, closed the ceremony with two patriotic numbers.

### **BUSINESS SESSION**

#### **Thursday, May 1, 2003 - 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by National Executive Committee Vice Chairman Jeffrey A. Dolezal. He gave thanks to the AL, the DAV, the MOPH, the VFW and the PVA for last night’s reception, the meeting hosts for entertainment, and the VFW and Auxiliary for providing this morning’s continental breakfast.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Naomi Jackson, Hospital Chairman, Department of Indiana, VFWA, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Introductions:** Mr. Jeffrey A. Dolezal introduced the participants at the head table: Mr. Jim Delgado; LTC Mary Jones; Mr. Mark Regan, Chairman, Recommendations Subcommittee; Mr. Mike Manning, Chairman, Recommendations Subcommittee; Ms. Judith McCombs, Chair, SOP ad-hoc; Mr. Del Turner, Membership Subcommittee.

**Roll Call:** The purpose of the formal roll call of the National Representatives and Deputy Representatives of the member organizations in attendance ensures that VAVS is complying with the policy in VHA Handbook 1620.1. In that regard, Jeffrey A. Dolezal called the roll for the 2003 Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Service Members, Associate Service Members, Donor Members, and Honorary Members.

**Goals and Objectives:** The following are the Goals and Objectives for the 57th Annual Meeting of the VAVS National Advisory Committee:

1. Provide the Department of the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee an opportunity to conduct its business in a manner that assures its achievement of all responsibilities charged by its charter.
2. Provide committee orientation to local and National VAVS Representatives and Deputies.
3. Present all member organization representatives an overview of current and pending VAVS policies and procedures.
4. Accommodate full and open communications among the member organizations, representatives and the Voluntary Service Central Office and field staff.
5. Provide the Committee's member organizations with the educational and training programs designed to share information geared towards improving volunteer programs with special emphasis on methods to recruit, retain, motivate, and recognize volunteers.
6. Furnish the committee's member organizations the opportunity to hear from VA leadership concerning key issues within the Department.
7. Arrange for Committee review of and action on its pending recommendations.
8. Honor the national recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award, Mr. Philip Nodhturft, III, student volunteer at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, Florida.
9. Honor the male and female VAVS Volunteers of the year: Mr. James E. Brennan, South Texas Veterans Health Care System, Kerrville, Texas and Mrs. Wanda McLean, VA Medical Center, Roseburg, Oregon.
10. Recognize Anna Diehl, VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinic (formerly the VA Domiciliary, White City, Oregon), as the recipient of the Voluntary Service Award for Excellence.

**Opening Remarks:** LTC Mary Jones made encouraging remarks, thanking everyone for their support and help. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Ed Rose, who served 15 years as Director, then served as a Masonic representative.

**Reports from Member Organizations:** LTC Mary Jones read reports turned into her by Mark Regan, American Legion; Marion Schwerman, National Representative, American Legion Auxiliary; Ed Hartman; Mike Manning; Dave Rabijs, National Representative and Andrew Nagy, Deputy National Representative, Forty and Eight; Miriam Jaffee, National Representative, Jewish War Veterans; Rosetta Quartarone,

National Representative, Ladies Auxiliary to Veterans of Foreign Wars; Pat Cody; Bill Bryce; Del "Bulldog" Turner; LaVerne Wozniak, National Representative, Ladies Auxiliary, Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A. ; William Colley, National Representative, Sons of AMVETS; Salvation Army; Marie Dunlap, National Representative, United Voluntary Services; William Bradshaw, National Representative, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Auxiliary; and Judith McCombs.

Jeffrey A. Dolezal reviewed the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting.

### **Subcommittees:**

**Membership:** Del Turner, Chairman, reported that they are trying to get the UAW involved.

**Recommendations:** Mike Manning, Chairman, thanked his committee members, then read the recommendations to be voted on in the Legislative Session on May 2, 2003:

**Recommendation No. 1 (Sponsored by Disabled American Veterans):** It is recommended that volunteers be credited with hours for their travel time. For distances up to 100 miles: two hours; distances 200 miles and up: four hours.

*The Executive Committee recommends disapproval.* VHA Handbook 1620.1.5c states that "Volunteers serving on a WOC basis are regarded within the purview of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) i.e. liability, when they are working within the scope of their assigned duties." Employees are not covered while in transit to and from work; therefore, volunteers are not covered unless their assignment specifically includes travel.

**Recommendation No. 2 (Sponsored by the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States):** It is recommended Chiefs of Voluntary Service (or whatever designation the position may have) be directed by VHA to preserve the integrity of the local VAVS Committee meetings, i.e., in some integrated stations the VAVS meetings are being held by closed circuit TV at the primary facility and the other facilities are taken out of the loop. Discussions are being made on the primary facility only and others travel sometimes great distance to watch a TV presentation that does not apply to them.

*The Executive Committee recommends approval.*

**Recommendation No. 3 (Sponsored by the Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A., Ladies Auxiliary):** It is recommended that in the future, all letters of certification would be acceptable by e-mail. At present time we do have a listing of the Voluntary Services e-mail.

*The Executive Committee suggests disapproval.* Current policy, 1620.1.7.b., does not prohibit the use of e-mail as a form of communication from the certifying official to local facilities appointing VAVS Representatives. The



communication is to be addressed to the Facility Director, ATTN: Voluntary Service Program Manager. It should be noted that standard business letter is preferred.

**Recommendation No. 4 (Sponsored by the Executive Committee):** It is recommended that SHA should institute a preceptorship (i.e. training) program for the Voluntary Service Program Managers that would provide unified quality standards and ensure the professionalism of all Voluntary Service staff. This would provide consistency and continuity, enhancing the interaction of the staff, participating organizations, and volunteers.

*The Executive Committee recommends approval.*

**Recommendation No. 5 (Sponsored by the Executive Committee):** It is recommended that VHA should encourage facility and VISN directors to incorporate Voluntary Service resources in business and strategic plans, and should develop performance measures reflecting the impact and utilization of those resources.

*The Executive Committee recommends approval.*

**Recruitment:** Presented by Mark Regan, Chairman. He acknowledged the committee members: Pat Cody; Pam Thomas; Carol Williams. Steve Moynihan has also been a helpful asset. There is a need for an action plan to increase the number and diversity of volunteers, to develop benchmarks to measure that effort, and to promote communication between national and local representatives. He asked that everyone fill out the surveys provided to them and to be sure and get them back to the committee members. There will be a focus group on Saturday at 2 p.m.

**NAC Volunteer of the Year:** Presented by LTC Mary Jones. It is an honor to help select volunteers. The Woman Volunteer of the Year is Wanda McLean, from Roseburg, Oregon, a volunteer with the American Red Cross. The Man Volunteer of the Year is James Brennan from Kerrville, an American Legion volunteer. Ms. McLean is unable to attend. Her award was presented at an earlier ceremony. Mr. Brennan will be at the Ceremony.

**Revision to SOP:** Judith McCombs mentioned the change to the NAC charter. The phrase that currently reads "VAVS National Advisory Committee advises the Undersecretary. . ." will now read "VAVS National Advisory Committee will provide advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs through the Under Secretary." After mentioning this change, she narrated the history of the SOP.

(Recess.)

**Introductions:** Mr. Jeffrey A. Dolezal introduced the participants at the head table: Jim Delgado; Jim Donahoe, Director of Canteen Services; and Rebecca Byrd, Project Manager, Volunteer Timekeeping.

**VAVS Report:** Jim Delgado thanked all for coming to this annual event, then presented his report.

Annual VAVS Reports are being provided again this year. Please use them as another tool to tell the VAVS story within your organizations.

Recruitment continues to be our top priority to meet new needs and to reach new people. Potential volunteers identified through the VAVS web page have increased. We have received over 400 inquiries this year and had approximately 50 volunteers placed through the mechanism.

We have continued to develop new contacts with and expand our resources with Business and Corporate community. There has been a continued partnership with SBC/SNET. A partnership with staff from Choice Hotels is also being formed.

There has also been a continued partnership with USA Freedom Corps and the Library of Congress (Veterans History Project). There are 30 facilities that have 72 volunteers devoted to the Veterans History Project. We have partnered with the Digital Clubhouse Network; volunteers, predominantly students, interview veterans and develop contemporary video presentations or mini movies of the veterans life, "Stories of Service".

We must seize the moment of a renewed sense of patriotism and an interest in serving those who have served as a way to recruit more volunteers.

There has been continued work on background checks for volunteers.

The recruitment of student volunteers is a high priority. We established a student volunteer focus group to assist in the development of recruitment strategies for students, including ideas on how to improve our web page.

Mr. Delgado read excerpts from "Living Memories", a collection of personal essays published by USVH. There is a definite need to work on bridging the gap between those returning from "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and the volunteers who are currently serving veterans.

Gerald McRaney has agreed to serve as Chairman of the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans for the second consecutive year.

Service Priorities for the FY2003 include: recruitment and retention, the VAVS timekeeping system, education plan for staff and volunteers, and getting younger volunteers to help with younger veterans.

Mr. Delgado thanked all the representatives/deputies of VAVS member organizations, the VAVS field staff, and the VACO staff for all the very special contributions to the many successes of the program.

(Applause.)

**VAVS Timekeeping System:** presented by Rebecca Byrd, National Project Manager, Volunteer Timekeeping Program, Representative of System Design and Development, Oakland, CA. Ms. Byrd compared the old VTK system that used MUMPS platform to the new web-based Volunteer Service System. There are six sites using this new system already: Palo Alto (alpha site), Birmingham, Detroit, Bay Pines, Altoona, and Togus. At the end of FY2003, there will be no need for the Austin Automation Center. There will be less discrepancies in data and less system down time.

There have been no registered complaints about performance so far. There will be just one national database, no data storage at the Austin center. There will be more accurate reporting with real-time entry of hours, and less local maintenance.

Schedule of new system implementation: VISN 1-2, 7-8, 11 and 21 (May 30, 2003); VISN 3-6, 9-10, and 12 (July 17, 2003); and VISN 15-20, 22 and 23 (August 29, 2003). Ms. Byrd introduced the new welcome page and auto-login screen, walking through the actual login process. She asked people to come by her booth for more information.

**Veterans Canteen Service:** Jeff Dolezal introduced Mr. James B. Donahoe, Director of Veterans Canteen Service. Mr. Donahoe then did his PowerPoint presentation, explaining the VCS priorities.

He introduced the WOW! tag, which stands for the best price and value. Major Pharmaceutical is the manufacturer of low-cost over-the-counter drugs offered. All the house brands have combined to become Exchange Select. With Exchange Select, you can save at least 50% over national brand items.

There is a special order program because of the lack of space in canteens. There will be a phone in the kiosk with a direct line to the special order service in St. Louis that people will be encouraged to use.

The VCS vision is to become the VA Company Store.

Mr. Donahoe then showed a video, "I'm a Veteran. . ."

Jeffrey A. Dolezal made a few housekeeping announcements and reviewed the afternoon's schedule. The meeting was adjourned.

(Recess.)

## **BUSINESS SESSION**

### **Friday, May 2, 2003 - 8:30 to 10 a.m.**

**Call to Order:** Mr. Jeff A. Dolezal, thanked the Indiana Elks Lodge National Service Committee and the Indiana Elks Association Parade of Nickels for the Ice Cream Social the night before, and the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary for the morning's continental breakfast. He then called the meeting to order.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** George Simpson, VAVS Representative, PVA, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Introductions:** Mr. Jeffrey A. Dolezal introduced the participants at the head table: Ms. Norma Velazquez, Voluntary Program Manager, Orlando Health Care System; Ms. Tess Scannell, Director, Senior Corps; Mr. Eric Benson, Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (NCA); Mr. Jim Delgado.

**National Cemetery Administration:** Mr. Jeff A. Dolezal introduced Eric Benson. Mr. Benson thanked Mr. Jim Delgado for inviting him and expressed appreciation for the volunteers. NCA depends on volunteers for landscaping work, clerical work, volunteer Honor Guards, and to catalog memorials and markers.

He showed the video, "The Friday Squad", about volunteer veterans who serve in a memorial Rifle Squad at Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

**Senior Corps:** Presented by Ms. Tess Scannell. Ms. Scannell thanked Jim Delgado and described how Veterans Partnership Network and Senior Corps can join together to work on the President's Call to Service. She gave an overview of Freedom Corps, and mentioned that the President is starting a Council on Volunteerism.

Senior Volunteers can provide compassionate follow-up care to those who have recently left the VA Hospitals. There are three programs of the Senior Corps: Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program).

VAVS has helped Senior Corps with their web-based recruitment system, matching seniors with volunteer opportunities in their communities. There is also a toll-free number to call. Saturday morning Mr. John Charles will demonstrate the web-based recruitment system. There are 1,400 non-profits participate on the web-based recruitment system.

Ms. Scannell then showed a video on Senior Corps.

**2003 Recommendations:** Presented by Mr. Mike Manning. Mr. Manning first read about the status of the 2002 recommendations.

Recommendation No. 1 (Sponsored by Disabled American Veterans):

Moved by Del Turner. AMVETS seconded.  
***Vote. The motion carried.***

Recommendation No. 2 (Sponsored by the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States):

Motion for approval made by Polish Legion. Seconded by the Forty and Eight.

***Vote. The motion carried.***

Recommendation No. 3 (Sponsored by the Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A., Ladies Auxiliary):

Moved by Vietnam Veterans for America. Seconded by Elks.

***Vote. The motion carried.***

Recommendation No. 4 (Sponsored by the Executive Committee):

Pat Cody moved for approval. Miriam Jaffe seconded.

***Vote. The motion carried.***

Recommendation No. 5 (Sponsored by the Executive Committee):

Moved by Bill Bryce. Seconded by Polish Legion Ladies Auxiliary.

***Vote. The motion carried.***

**Unfinished Business:** Judith McCombs read the revisions to the NAC SOP and entertained a motion to accept the new NAC SOP.

Mike Manning moved. DAV Auxiliary seconded.

***Vote. The motion carried.***

**NAC Volunteer of the Year Presentation:** This is the fourth year that the NAC has had the opportunity to recognize an outstanding male and outstanding female volunteer.

The female VAVS-NAC Volunteer of the Year is Ms. Wanda McLean, from Roseburg, Oregon, a volunteer with the American Red Cross. Ms. McLean has volunteered at the Roseburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center for 21 years, and has donated more than 27,000 hours of dedicated service to veteran patients. Her many VAVS activities include: providing comfort items, providing birthday parties in the transitional unit, participating in chapel services, dressing as Santa and visiting patients on Christmas morning, working at hospice after hours, participating in Christmas dances at the Elks Lodge for homebound veterans, shopping for homebound veterans, driving veterans to medical appointments and helping veterans with writing letters. She has previously been a Chapter Volunteer of the Year, and was named the Female American Red Cross Volunteer of the Year in 2002.

Ms. McLean was unable to attend due to illness, so Carol Williams of the American Red Cross accepted on her behalf.

(Applause.)

The male VAVS-NAC Volunteer of the Year is Mr. James E. Brennan from Kerrville, a

volunteer with the American Legion. Mr. Brennan has been a regularly scheduled volunteer for 24 years and has contributed 36, 847 hours of service at the VAMC, Kerrville, Texas. Mr. Brennan volunteers in the Palliative Care Program and developed the Integrative Methodologies Achieving Geriatric Excellence (IMAGE) program. He has recruited volunteers to assist with the program, donated all the material and equipment, attended training sessions with leading experts at his own expense and shares knowledge with patients and staff, collaborated with committee on patient progress, and is willing to do whatever the treatment team asks in support of Palliative Care patients.

Mr. Brennan will formally receive his award on Saturday.

(Applause.)

**VAVS Award for Excellence:** The Award for Excellence is recognition extended to the Voluntary Service Program Manager who exemplifies professionalism, commitment, and dedication to the service of veterans in his or her management of the Voluntary Service Program. Mr. Jim Delgado presented Ms. Anna Diehl, Chief, Community Resources Development at the VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinic with the 2003 VAVS Award for Excellence. Mr. Delgado complimented her for being a consummate professional with a commitment to excellence and volunteerism.

(Applause.)

Ms. Diehl thanked all for the distinct honor. She explained her two main beliefs: there's a purpose in everything and none of us succeed alone. She thanked her family, her staff, Dr. Max Macintosh, her friends and colleagues.

(Applause.)

Jim Delgado introduced Jason Hom, a student who helped with "Living Memories" and will be interning this summer with VAVS. Mr. Delgado thanked Federal Wholesale for providing enough copies of "Living Memories" for everyone.

**Presentation of Next Year's Meeting:** Mr. Jeffrey A. Dolezal introduced Ms. Norma Velazquez, who presented the plans for the 2004 NAC Educational Conference to be held in Orlando, Florida. Ms. Velazquez described the City of Orlando and showed a video, extending an invitation for everyone to attend.

Mr. Jeffrey A. Dolezal made housekeeping announcements and went over the day's agenda. He thanked Mike Wright and staff for setting up this Indianapolis meeting. The meeting was concluded.

(Recess.)

**PARKE LUNCHEON**  
**Friday, May 2, 2003 - 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.**

**Posting of Colors:** The colors were posted by the Marine Corps Recruiting Station, Indianapolis.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Diane Ward, MCL, VAVS Deputy Representative, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Invocation:** The invocation was given by Jesus Quintana, Jr., MCL, VAVS Representative.

**Welcome:** Fred Burns, President, James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board, welcomed guests, stating that we are gathered to give recognition to youth volunteers who serve our veteran patients and to pay special tribute to our honored guest and recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award.

**Introductions:** The participants at the head table were introduced: Mark Regan, Parke Fund Board Member; Mr. Michael Manning, Treasurer, Parke Fund Board; Lt. General Carol A. Mutter, the distinguished guest; Jean Theide, Parke Fund Board member; Mr. Andrew Nagy, Parke Fund Board Member; Margaret Haas, Parke Fund Board Secretary; LTC Mary Jones, Parke Fund Board Vice President.

**Keynote address:** Fred Burns introduced LTG Carol A. Mutter, USMC (retired).

She thanked everyone for being VIPs (Volunteers Impacting People). She pointed out that the new generation entering the armed forces are smarter and just as dedicated as past generations.

April 13 was Global Youth Service Day, and over 3 million people in 50 states and 35 other countries participated. A young volunteer noted that "Service makes your heart bigger and your mind broader."

Dr. Stephen Covey says, "Schedule your priorities, or your priorities will be what's on your schedule." What makes VIPs decide to dedicate their time, when it is such a limited and valuable resource, to other people? The VAVS slogan is "Satisfaction through service" and when you're busy doing for others, you don't get tired, you get energized.

LTG Mutter then thanked everyone on behalf of all the vets who can't be here to say it.

(Applause.)

**Presentation of James H. Parke Scholarship:** LTC Mary Jones, Vice President, Parke Fund, described the purpose of the James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship and how it was founded, how the nominations are received and the winners selected from among the many meritorious candidates.

LTC Jones announced that this year's Parke Memorial Scholarship goes to Philip Nodhturft, III, a student at Dartmouth who helped develop a student volunteer program at the James A. Haley Hospital in Tampa, Florida.

A video tribute was shown, and Philip Nodhturft, III, was presented with the award.

**Award Recipient Comments:** Thanks for that wonderful introduction -- that slide show was completely unexpected. I got a little teary-eyed. It's both a pleasure and an honor to stand here today to accept this James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship. I'm very grateful and would like to thank a few people who have been so instrumental in my life and my success. I want to thank Christine Feeser, the Chief of Voluntary Service at the James A. Haley Hospital for nominating me for this prestigious award. She's been a major source of support and has mentored me throughout my years as a youth volunteer at the Tampa VA. She is indeed a remarkable person and has encouraged me in all my endeavors, consistently facilitating my success.

I want to thank Mr. Delgado, National Chief of Voluntary Service, for his support as well. His enthusiasm and passion for the National Youth Volunteer Program is truly remarkable and unparalleled. I also want to thank Laura Balun, along with Mr. Delgado, for all their hard work and planning from behind-the-scenes that takes place to make this conference so successful. I'd also like to send thanks to the members of the James H. Parke Memorial Board, honored guests, and all the Veterans Service organizations who contributed so generously to this scholarship fund. Without you, none of this would be possible.

To the veterans and your families here today, let me first say a simple thank you. Because of your service and sacrifices, we live in the strongest, greatest free nation in the history of the world. We live with the blessing of freedom for which you fought, and in times like these, when we've struggled with war, the true character of our soldiers and veterans shines through to the rest of the world. Your loyalty, strength and service



has enabled this country to fight for and protect the rights that everyone deserves to experience.

Veterans have risked their lives and have been willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for this great country and you are all our heroes. You all deserve the utmost respect, praise, and recognition.

It has been an honor for me to work with the veterans back home in Tampa, and I've learned so much from them about history, about their personal lives, and about myself, as well. I feel enlightened after having interacted with a few of these great men and women and I would now like to share some stories and examples of some veterans I know back home.

I worked with one veteran named Wayne. He had a severe head injury that resulted in paralysis on one side of his body and resulted in a severe speech impediment. He had no family or friends to visit him and was extremely lonely. I worked one day a week with him for two years, helping him with his speech problem and helping to reduce his isolation and loneliness. Most volunteers preferred not to work with Wayne, because it was very difficult to interact and to understand him. However, I worked with Wayne because I knew there was something special in him trying to get out. Over time, he was able to be moderately understood and actually sang songs and Christmas carols over the past few holidays. We developed a strong bond and there were times when I was told that he had actually waited two hours in advance of my arrival, waiting for me to come visit with him. When I would come into the social room, he always greeted me with the most radiant smile, clapped his hands, and displayed an excitement that is difficult to describe in words.

When I was a junior in high school, we were asked to write a paper on a personal hero and why we selected the one we did. Most of my classmates chose people who are famous and prominent in the public sphere, such as big-name athletes and various Presidents. I chose Wayne. I started by writing that my hero's not someone who is famous, and proceeded to discuss how he sacrificed his body for our freedoms and about the qualities that he possessed to overcome his disabilities. I concluded by saying that our true heroes are our veterans.

Another veteran I worked with was Bill. Bill took great pride in the fact that he was a soldier of the Special Forces, an elite group of men specially trained in the techniques of warfare. His pride bubbled over into several of his conversations with me and other volunteers. He was always extremely interesting, funny and always captivating. He told me numerous stories about his training and experiences in Vietnam. He talked at great length of how he survived in diverse conditions and hostile situations. He really made history come alive. He too had no family and looked forward to my visits. Bill enjoyed teaching all the youth volunteers new card games and board games, especially

Yahtzee. That was always his favorite and one day he even got my mom involved in the game. It was while we played these games that he would tell me these wonderful stories. He took great delight in knowing that his stories could keep the young volunteers attention and he was always amazed at how bright and goal-directed the young children of today are. He said this experience changed his view of young people, and admitted that he originally thought young folks of today were a lost generation -- but has changed his views dramatically after having interacted with us. I remember writing an article about Bill and his background in the special forces that was published in the hospital newsletter. He carried the newsletter everywhere he went and he showed everyone he met the article about his accomplishments.

Another veteran I worked with was Kyle. Kyle was paralyzed from the waist down from his injury and he and I bonded almost immediately this past summer. He and I would talk about anything and everything, and felt very comfortable with each other, and looked forward to our daily visits. One day I came in with his favorite food from Kentucky Fried Chicken and ate lunch with him. Later that weekend I came in with some more food and I had the opportunity to meet his family. His mom, dad, and brother were there, and we began talking. As we had lunch, Kyle's dad shared with me that he too was a veteran from WWII. He told me that he was injured on Christmas Eve, 1944 -- shot with a German mortar. The following day, on Christmas day, he was awarded the Purple Heart medal. However, over the years, his medal was lost and he had made several attempts to attain a duplicate without success. His local congressman told him that it would take two years to get the medal replaced, but this wasn't good enough, because Kyle's father was also fighting another battle at the time -- this time, with cancer of the lung. Not knowing how long he would live, he wanted the medal as soon as possible so that he could pass it on to his children. Kyle's dad asked me if there was any way I could help him get the medal replaced. I sensed his feeling of urgency and obtained the vital information related to Christine Feeser, who provided me the name and contact information of the local VAVS representative of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. His name is Ed Sitton and he took action immediately. The medal was presented to Kyle's dad at a formal ceremony on Wednesday, August 7, 2002 which was National Purple Heart Day. I felt honored to be part of that momentous occasion. Working with Kyle and his father taught me so many valuable lessons about patriotism, history and the importance of a positive attitude when we face adversity and major setbacks in life.

These veterans, and the many others too, have touched my life. All my volunteer experience has made me into the person I am today. I look forward to the future, to many more interactions. Honoring me with this scholarship truly means a lot. I plan to continue my education beyond the present year at Dartmouth and I've realized how much more I would like to learn. When I began my first year at college, I only vaguely anticipated the chances that I would have to improve myself, both academically and socially. Now I see the number of books, the infinitude of ideas and the magnitude of creative urges that exist. Now I have come to some awareness of what it means to be educated and I realized that I am nowhere near where my goal would like to be. This scholarship is an opportunity to continue studying and to continue bettering myself and

those around me. The past year and a half have been enriching, beyond belief. Specifically the classes I have been taking in Philosophy, which is my major, have been very interesting and helpful to my personal growth, thought development, and analysis. My school work and my volunteer work have been particularly influential in my goal to go to law school and become an attorney. I have made significant contributions as a youth volunteer, but I want to enhance my ability to continue working by helping veterans and I think I can do this best by becoming involved in the legislation process. I want to be involved in developing a passing legislation that benefits our elderly veterans; this generous scholarship will help immensely in making my dreams come true.

In closing, let me say that as a youth volunteer I feel a special responsibility in these stressful times to ensure that the peers of my generation get involved, and provide service to our veterans while experiencing the benefits of volunteering that I have been fortunate enough to receive. To that end, I am in the process of initiating a Dartmouth College chapter of the United Students for Veterans Health. I plan to be the Chapter chair and plan to provide the leadership to make this chapter a success. Let me close by again thanking all the veterans who have touched my life and all of you here today. I've met many of you at my presentations and I have one left this afternoon -- I encourage you to come if you haven't so that I can meet as many of you as I can.

Of course, I can't end without thanking my parents -- truly the two most influential and important people in my life who have given me so much, and without whom I would be lost. Two of the most important lessons they have taught me are that hard work and dedication really do pay off, and that every person has a responsibility to contribute something to the world that will make this place a better place to live in. To that end, I truly feel privileged to have worked with our veterans and will cherish this honor always. Thank you.

(Applause.)

**Acceptance of Donations:** Mr. Burns accepted contributions to the James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship from various member organizations and others in attendance. It is through generous donations such as these that the scholarships are possible and that the fund will continue for years to come. Today's donations totaled \$20,558.54, making the current principal fund \$519,447.52.

**Retiring of the Colors:** The colors were retired by the Marine Corps Recruiting Station, Indianapolis.

Mr. Burns adjourned the meeting.

## **STORIES OF SERVICE WITH DIGITAL CLUBHOUSE NETWORK**

Faculty: Warren Hegg, President and Founder, Digital Clubhouse Network  
Ryan Hegg, Program Director, Digital Clubhouse Director  
Greg Perkins, Student Volunteer, Palo Alto, California

The Stories of Service project brings together volunteers (adult and youth) to create short documentaries about the personal memories of veterans in their communities. It is designed to not just record oral histories, but to show youth and adult volunteers how to work with veterans to create “Digital Stories”, which are short documentaries that illustrate the veteran’s story, told in his or her own voice, with photos, music and sound effects.

The project is being launched at 10 sites this year, and hopefully will expand to 15 next year and 25 the following year. We seek to develop relationships with volunteer organizations locally and at the national level in order to ensure that we reach as many communities as quickly as possible.

The digital storytelling process was reviewed and some sample “Digital Stories” were shown.

## **HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR INTERN PROGRAM AT TAMPA VAMC**

Faculty: Christine Feeser, Voluntary Service Program Manager, James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, Florida  
Virginia Nodhturft, EdD., Associate Chief of Staff for Nursing Education, James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, Florida  
Philip Nodhturft, III, Student Volunteer, James A. Haley Veteran Hospital, Tampa, Florida

The purpose of the junior intern program is to promote exchange between the patients and the student volunteer interns, and promote experiences that enhance a sense of

well being, personal value, and personal communication among the veteran Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) patients. The program goals are to inspire junior interns to consider a healthcare career working with patients with spinal cord injuries and other disabled patients, and to help youth realize the positive impact they can make on the lives of others. The specific objective for junior interns is to be a caring, empathetic friend to patients and to develop communication skills. The main students recruited are honor students, or students who already have some volunteer experience. They are high school students, at least 15 years old with reliable attendance, punctuality, discipline, and outstanding academic records. Once they are accepted into the program, they are given an orientation, two weeks of training, and then do clinical hours working with Spinal Cord Injury patients.

There are typically around 15-27 students in the class, with one student to about two veterans. When their hours are complete, the volunteers receive a Certificate of Completion at a Recognition Ceremony.

### **RECRUITMENT - BACK TO BASICS**

Faculty: Deborah Brookshire, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Southern Arizona Health Care System, Tucson, Arizona

If you target your volunteer recruitment, your general and overall recruitment will fall into place. The four components of a comprehensive recruitment strategy are: figuring out what the needs of your hospital are, what resources you can use to find the people you want to recruit, what kind of people you want to recruit, and how you can get them interested in volunteering with the VA. A strategy will then need to be developed using these components.

A worksheet was shown using these components, and sample recruitment tools and resources were shown.

### **ENHANCING METHODS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION AND EARLY RESOLUTION**

Faculty: Steven Laird, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia

Resolving conflict was shown as the greatest educational need or interest on a survey taken by volunteers and staff. Workplace conflicts happen between volunteers, staff, and even veterans. Around 90% of conflict is rooted in communication problems. Our interpersonal style buffers stress. What can we do preventively to minimize the potential for conflict?

Different perceptions of “good” communication were related. Good communication truly defined is “message conveyed, received, and confirmed as fully and accurately understood.” What goes on inside our own minds plays a huge role in how we communicate to other people and how we interpret what other people are saying. If we want to resolve conflict in the workplace, the starting point is to ensure effective communication. Some fundamentals of communication: respect, cooperate, seek, value and act on input, communicate openly, provide feedback, recognize performance, coach/mentor, and encourage innovation. 55% of employees leaving the VHA system in 2001 felt like their input had not been sought after or valued.

Obtain consent from the people you want to deal with - it empowers participation, provides a purpose for the meeting, allows emotional preparation, and clarifies the participants’ roles. The most important principle for addressing conflict is respect, and the second most important is listening.

The five critical tools of active listening are: paraphrasing, clarifying, probing, summarizing, and reframing. Confrontational skills were summarized: how to handle disrespect, personal rights, stages of resolution, problem solving, and moving towards solutions.